

COINTELPRO 101

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Thursday, March 10, 2011

COINTELPRO may not be a well-understood acronym but its meaning and continuing impact are absolutely central to understanding the government's wars and repression against progressive movements. COINTELPRO represents the state's strategy to prevent movements and communities from overturning white supremacy and creating racial justice. COINTELPRO is both a formal program of the FBI and a term frequently used to describe a conspiracy among government agencies local, state, and federal to destroy movements for self-determination and liberation for Black, Brown, Asian, and Indigenous struggles, as well as mount an institutionalized attack against allies of these movements and other progressive organizations.

COINTELPRO 101 is a 56-minute educational film that will open the door to understanding this history. This documentary will introduce viewers new to this history to the basics and direct them to other resources where they can learn more. The intended audiences are the generations that did not experience the social justice movements of the sixties and seventies.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Andres Alegria, Prentis Hemphill, Anita Johnson and Claude Marks

Claude Marks is the Project Director of The Freedom Archives, a political, cultural oral history project, media restoration center, and production facility in San Francisco. He acts as a media consultant to several universities. Under his direction, The Freedom Archives has produced several documentary CDs and videos combining restored historical media and contemporary interviews.

Henry "Hank" Jones is a community activist, Former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organizer, former member of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense and one of the SF 8/Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR).

ABOUT THE FREEDOM ARCHIVES

The Freedom Archives contains over 10,000 hours of audio and video tapes. These recordings date from the late-60s to the mid-90s and chronicle the progressive history of the Bay Area, the United States, and international solidarity movements. The collection includes weekly news/poetry/music programs broadcast on several educational radio stations; in-depth interviews and reports on social and cultural issues; diverse activist voices; original and recorded music, poetry, original sound collages; and an extensive La Raza collection.

These materials constitute a compelling record of 40 years of recorded sound, images and cultural diversity. The music/poetry mixes, production techniques, and sound collages represent an innovative contribution to the art of radio and the cultural ambiance of “the 60s” and subsequent decades.

Selected highlights are on a CD sampler, *Roots of Resistance*, to provide an example of the vast range of materials in the archive and to further promote the restoration work. While the preservation of the Freedom Archives is of immediate concern, future educational audio programs are envisioned for school use and radio broadcast.

This historical treasure, preserved and made widely accessible, brings to life the stirring sounds and images of these tumultuous times. Just a few highlights include: dramatic recordings of Fannie Lou Hamer, Paul Robeson, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, James Baldwin, Angela Davis, Mario Savio, Jane Fonda, Tom Hayden, Abbie Hoffman, and Ramsey Clark during the war in Vietnam; prison interviews with Lolita Lebron, Assata Shakur, and George Jackson.

We have recently acquired a number of audio tapes about Latino movements from independent producer Jesse ‘Chuy’ Varela—now at KCSM—and an extensive collection of the late Colin Edwards—who produced programs for the BBC, Canadian Broadcasting, Irish Radio, and Pacifica Radio about everything from the Black Power Movement to Vietnam and the Middle East.

The archives contains much exclusive material on the civil rights, student, antiwar, prison, women’s, and gay/lesbian movements along with an extensive La Raza collection and in-depth reports on key events from San Francisco to South Africa. The collection brings together the sounds and speeches of local and national leaders and protests, and the works of hundreds of poets, activists, and musicians.

Lessons of the Recent Past

There is an overwhelming need for the young people of today to have access to non-filtered, non-biased educational resources that allow them to learn more about our recent history. Young people need to know about and understand the aims, events, accomplishments and setbacks of those influential times. The archives and projects growing from the collection can help satisfy a growing interest by youth of many cultures in these social and cultural currents, and can assist them in unearthing lessons of the recent past even as they raise new concerns of their own. Educational programs utilizing multifaceted audio resources can convey recent history to high school and college students in dramatic ways that cut through the stereotypical depictions of textbooks, the mainstream media, and commercialized mass culture.

Educational Resources and Curricula

The collection is not only an invaluable resource to young people and students, but also to teachers, diverse community organizations and media outlets, activists, historians, artists and researchers. The collection conveys recent history to high school and college students in dramatic ways. Excerpts have been incorporated into new educational programming and the long-range potential is tremendous.

We are developing historical curricula based on primary sources, often misrepresented by textbooks and popularized history.

Preservation

To do so we need to build our capacity to identify and preserve historical materials. The taped archive has also begun to deteriorate. Without preservation, its very existence as a vital resource for young people and future generations will be lost. On a shoestring, with largely volunteer labor, we have assembled the equipment and facilities to begin both the data base classification of the materials and the re-mastering of the collection. It is critical to preserve this oral history.

Internships

Our youth internship program will ensure that young people also play a crucial role in these tasks while benefiting educationally, technically, and in their future pathways and careers. A training program for students and new program producers provides experience in historic restoration as well as audio production and journalism.

For more information on The Freedom Archives visit: <http://www.freedomarchives.org/index.html>

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES AT REDCAT

March 24: Emanuele Arciuli

March 26 – April 10: REDCAT International Children's Film Festival

April 2 – 3: Lemi Ponifasio/Mau: *Tempest: Without a Body*

April 5: Ostad Abbos Kosimov

April 28 – May 1: Pat Graney Company: *Faith*

For more information on these upcoming programs visit redcat.org